

Mr. FRASER (Peterborough West): Is not the soldier in many instances asked to repay the hospital bill in monthly instalments?

Mr. RALSTON: I am informed that there has never been a single case of the kind, that not one soldier has ever been asked to pay back the money. If anybody knows differently I should appreciate hearing about it.

Mr. FRASER (Peterborough West): I heard differently.

Mr. RALSTON: Would my hon. friend mind giving me the case? I do not mind his giving it to me publicly.

Mr. FRASER (Peterborough West): I will check on it and let the minister know.

Mr. RALSTON: Replying to my hon. friend's other question in reference to deferred pay, the general rule is that fifty per cent of the pay is deferred when there is no assignment of pay. If there is an assignment of pay the difference between the amount of the assigned pay and the fifty per cent is deferred. Deferred pay can be drawn on, generally speaking, in cases where there are extraordinary events in the family or family difficulties which demand an extra amount of money. Quite frequently I have had applications from soldiers to draw on their deferred pay on such grounds. Illness at home is another ground. Any bona fide case of hardship is given favourable consideration and the deferred pay is allowed to be drawn on in such a case.

Mr. BENCE: Is that only with respect to overseas personnel.

Mr. RALSTON: Yes. My hon. friend's other question was in reference to housing. I can say to him that I have every sympathy with the cases that are put up. A good many cases arise—perhaps they are not such as my hon. friend has in mind—from the fact that the wife or the family of the soldier wish to be with him as long as they can and therefore move from home.

Mr. LOCKHART: Not in this case. They are right in the place where they have lived all their lives.

Mr. RALSTON: I was thinking of Halifax as an example.

Mr. LOCKHART: It is nothing like that in this case.

Mr. RALSTON: I have had this matter up with my colleague, the Minister of Munitions and Supply, on many occasions. A separation allowance is paid to the wife with the very idea in mind that there will probably be a

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separation at some time or other in the soldier's experience, and that there should be some compensation on that account. I quite agree that the payment of separation allowance does not provide a house.

Mr. LOCKHART: If the minister will allow me to interject, the very fact that nearly 1,000 houses have been built under wartime housing indicates the need, and my understanding was that there were to be from fifteen to twenty of these houses built in my own particular locality, but we never got anything like that number. Out of seven or eight hundred built, only ten or fifteen were built in this particular locality, and when a soldier's wife is evicted the minister will appreciate the discontent that is caused among the soldiers.

Mr. RALSTON: I was just about to express appreciation of what my colleague, the Minister of Munitions and Supply, has done with regard to housing, but after what my hon. friend says I had perhaps better not be too enthusiastic. I know that in one town 150 have been built by wartime housing, and provision was made for an extra twenty. I certainly would want to take up my hon. friend's case to see if it is not possible to get a number of houses built there. They are generally made available to the municipality on the understanding that the municipality will give first call to soldiers' dependents. I am going to ask my hon. friend to give me particulars of that as well.

Mr. MacNICOL: Are there other regulations?

Mr. RALSTON: There are no regulations; this is a working arrangement. Wartime housing does not apply to soldiers; as my hon. friend knows, it is for the purpose of supplying housing for munition workers who have to live near the plants where they are working. This is only an arrangement between the two departments. Although we are not legally responsible, naturally I feel we should take the greatest interest in helping to provide proper housing for the soldier's wife and dependents. We had a survey made on our own account, apart from the Department of Munitions and Supply and apart from the authorities, in three of the most congested areas, and were able to demonstrate the need and to get a reasonable and I think a sufficient number of wartime houses to take care of serious cases. There are no arrangements other than the arrangements which are made with the municipality whereby the municipality is handed over the houses, and asked to look after them, either through the municipal organization itself or through civilian committees. Very often, as